

Soc 308, Judaism and Christianity in Sociological Perspective, Spring 2010

UT-Austin Unique Course # 46245 for Sociology, # 48205 for WCV

Class Time: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-5

Location: RLM 7.104

Instructor: Dr. Mark Regnerus, Burdine 572. Email: regnerus@prc.utexas.edu

Office Hours: Friday 9-11, and by appointment

TA: Jennifer Storch. Office location: Burdine 602. Email: jenniferstorch@hotmail.com

TA's office hours: Monday 1:30-3:30, Thursday 5-6

Course Description

While a majority of Americans still identify as Christians, many know little about its historic roots in Judaism, about the texts that Jews and Christians share, about what Jews believe, how and why the two faiths diverged and evolved, how institutionalized Christianity addresses—or more aptly, fails to seriously consider—its Jewish origins, and about how Jews and Christians have gotten along throughout history. This course is an introduction to these themes, with particular attention paid to the social, historical, and intellectual contexts and forces which have shaped these processes up to the present day. Particular attention is paid to religious evolution—how systems and ways of thought and action change, why, and how Christians and Jews have dealt with such changes.

Contacting the instructor: The best way to reach me is by email at regnerus@prc.utexas.edu. In general the TA can answer most course-related technical questions. I enjoy personal and course material conversations, however, so please don't hesitate to drop by during office hours or make an appointment.

Course Requirements: Final grade is determined as follows:

Exam #1= 20%, Exam #2= 25%, Final Exam = 30%

5 quizzes worth 5% each=25%.

Lectures: Course lectures are on Mondays and Wednesdays, led by Dr. Regnerus. This is very important to state—there will be lots of material that will only be covered in class, and that will be on the three exams.

Exams: the three exams will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions, short answer questions, and perhaps an essay question. They are all closed book. The final exam (#3) is comprehensive; the other two cover their respective sections of the course. Please do *not* ask to take them at a time other than the scheduled date and time. The first exam will be administered on Wednesday, February 24, and the second exam will be administered on Wednesday, April 14. The final exam is comprehensive; its date will be announced when it becomes known. To prepare for them, first make sure that you understand the *meaning* and *function* of all of the *terms* and *concepts* covered in the unit that the exam tests. That is, you should be able both to define each concept accurately and to demonstrate how it is related to the rest of the material in that unit. Second, you should be able to use the specific content of the unit the exam tests to illustrate or illuminate the *general themes* developed in the course. When studying and note-taking, always distinguish the *centrally important* issue or argument in the reading or lecture from the less-important details, facts, and other data that are only meant to illustrate or support the central issue or argument. The danger of not doing so is treating all material as equally important, becoming overwhelmed with information, and failing to see and grasp the major point. It's not that supporting details and illustrations are unimportant and can be

disregarded, just that they should not be cognitively processed in a way that obscures the reading or lecture's *main* argument. I give makeup exams *only* in what I consider extreme circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, death of a family member) and only if I am informed before the exam.

Quizzes: Five quizzes will be administered during the semester, approximately every two weeks. The quizzed will cover assigned readings since the last quiz (or exam). They will consist of 2-3 short essay questions simply designed to decipher whether the student has read the material. Each will count for five percent of the course grade. They are scheduled for five Wednesdays: Feb 3, Feb 17, March 10, March 31, and April 28.

Accommodations: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259. At the beginning of the semester, students who need special accommodations should notify me and present a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office.

Professor Profile: Dr. Regnerus received his PhD in Sociology in 2000 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and has taught at UT since 2002. He also teaches an Intro-to-Sociology course (Soc 302) and occasionally research methods (Soc 317m). His published research concerns sexual decision-making, family formation, and the influence of religion on human behavior. His first book (assigned here) was published in 2007, entitled *Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers*. He is currently finishing a second book project, entitled *Premarital Sex in America*.

Required Readings:

The Source, by James Michener (Random House, 2002, although any edition will suffice).

Each student should have access to a good, modern version of the Bible (including the Apocrypha). The recommended versions are the New International Version (NIV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), or the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). A copy of the Tanakh (or Old Testament) published the Jewish Publication Society (New JPS) can also prove helpful. I will be using the NRSV for course purposes.

All other required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Outline and Reading Schedule

Wed, Jan 20 Syllabus and Course Introduction

Week 1 Introductory Themes, Sociology, Syncretism, and Religious Evolution

Jan 25, 27 Read Genesis 12–19; *The Source*, Level XIV “Of Death and Life”

Week 2 The Hebrew Worldview and Narrative Tradition

Feb 1, 3 Read Genesis 20–32, Deuteronomy 1-30; *The Source*, Level XIII “An Old Man and His God.” **Quiz 1 on Feb 3.**

Week 3 Christian Thought about Ancient Israel

Feb 8, 10 Read Genesis 1-11, Psalms 1-24, Isaiah 40-66

Week 4	Religious Evolution: From Judah to Judea to Judaism
Feb 15, 17	<u>Read</u> 1 Kings 12–22, 2 Kings 22-25, 1 Esdras. Quiz 2 on Feb 17.
Week 5	Socialization & Religious Change: The Hellenization of Judaism
Feb 22, 24	<u>Read</u> 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees 1-5; <i>The Source</i> , Level X “In the Gymnasium” Exam 1 on Wednesday, February 24.
Week 6	The Judaism of First Century Palestine
Mar 1, 3	<u>Read</u> the book of Matthew; pages 67–92 of <i>From Jesus to Christianity</i> , by L. Michael White (on Blackboard).
Week 7	The Law, a Jewish Jesus and “The Jews”
Mar 8, 10	<u>Read</u> the book of John, pages 17-52 of <i>The Misunderstood Jew</i> , by Amy-Jill Levine (on Blackboard). Quiz 3 on Mar 10.
Mar 15-19	Spring Break
Week 8	The Divergence of Christianity from Rabbinic Judaism
Mar 22, 24	<u>Read</u> Acts of the Apostles 2, 6-11, 13, 15, Galatians; <i>The Source</i> , Level VII “The Law”
Week 9	Socialization & Religious Change: The Hellenization of Christianity
Mar 29, 31	<u>Read</u> the book of Hebrews. Quiz 4 on Mar 31.
Week 10	Socialization & Religious Change: Shifting Attitudes of Christians toward Jews
Apr 5, 7	<u>Read</u> <i>The Source</i> , Level III “The Sainly Men of Safed” (1-3); Chapter 8, “Christian Antisemitism” in <i>Why the Jews</i> , by Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin (on Blackboard).
Week 11	Jewish-Christian Relations in the 20th Century
Apr 12, 14	<u>Read</u> “Dabru Emet: A Statement on Christians and Christianity” (on Blackboard) Exam 2 on Wednesday, April 14.
Week 12	The Holocaust
Apr 19, 21	<u>Read</u> Chapter 12, “Nazi Antisemitism” in <i>Why the Jews</i> , by Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin; “Birds never sing in this forest,” by Reidar Dittman in <i>Jews and Christians: People of God</i> (both on Blackboard).
Week 13	Judaism in Contemporary Christian Thought
Apr 26, 28	<u>Read</u> Romans 9-11. Quiz 5 on Apr 28.

Week 14**Modern Israel: Its History and Political Alliances with Christianity**

May 3, 5

Read *The Source*, Level I “Rebbe Itzik and the Sabra;” “What is the meaning of ‘Israel’ for Jews and Christians?” (on Blackboard)

Final Exam

Date and location TBD.

Academic Integrity

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including possible failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Refer to the Student Judicial Services website for policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty.

Grading Scale: At the end of the term, you will receive a letter grade, based on the following performance levels: A (94–100), A– (90–93), B+ (87–89), B (83–86), B– (80–82), C+ (77–79), C (73–76), C– (70–72), D+ (67–69), D (63–66), D– (60–62), F (<60)